



Forest Heights Police Department Policy and Procedures Manual

Subject:	Bomb Threats and Suspicious Packages			
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A. Purpose

To establish policy and procedures regarding Forest Heights Police Department (FHPD) officers responding to bomb threats or items suspected of or suspicious of being bombs.

B. Policy

1. The FHPD will respond to all bomb threats and explosive devices in a coordinated manner in an effort to preserve life and property.
2. Any notice the FHPD receives concerning bomb threats or the possible presence of a bomb will be acted upon immediately, as time may be critical.

C. Receipt of Bomb Threat Call

1. Although the Prince George's County Police Department (PGCoPD) Communications Division usually receives bomb threat calls, the possibility exists that the FHPD will be the first to receive such a call.
2. Upon receiving a bomb threat call the FHPD employee taking call will request the caller's:
 - a. name;
 - b. present location (address);
 - c. telephone number used to make the call;
 - d. location of bomb, if known;
 - e. how the caller learned of the bomb threat;
 - f. time the bomb is supposed to detonate, if known;
 - g. size of bomb and type of explosive, if known;
 - h. motivation for the bomb or bomb threat; and
 - i. instruct the caller not to touch the bomb or suspected bomb and to inform all persons to evacuate the area.
3. Immediately after obtaining as much of the above information as possible, the FHPD will contact the PGCoPD Communications Division providing all the available information.
4. The FHPD will immediately dispatch an officer to the scene if the location of the bomb threat is within FHPD jurisdiction.

D. Initial Response

1. Upon receiving a call reporting an explosive device, the FHPD will dispatch two officers to the scene, one being a supervisor, if available.
2. Officers responding to the bomb threat will maintain at least 500 feet between themselves and the reported location of the explosive device so as not to accidentally detonate the device via radio or cellular phone transmissions.
3. Officers will approach the scene with caution, aware of the possibility of secondary devices.
4. Officers will make every attempt to limit the use of radios and cellular telephones; when possible, landline telephones should be used.

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5. If, upon arrival, a suspected bomb is located, the officer will:
 - (a) notify the PGCoPD of the location and description (including noises) of the device, however, a radio or cell phone will not be used in the vicinity of the suspected bomb, nor will a building room light be turned on or off nor a door closed;
 - (b) ensure that the device is not moved or touched;
 - (c) begin an evacuation of the area as needed;
 - (d) establish command and act as the Incident Commander (IC) until such time that he is relieved by a PGCoPD officer. The PGCoPD is responsible for notifying the Office of the State Fire Marshall (OSFM). The State Fire Marshall assumes command of the scene upon his arrival and for arranging for the response of the OSFM Bomb Disposal Unit, if needed.

E. Building Evacuation & Search When Device is not Seen

1. The IC will be responsible for all operations, including the search.
2. In cases of bomb threats where no specific evidence exists to indicate the presence of an explosive device, the IC will use the following guidelines in determining whether or not to conduct a search of the premises:
 - a. any information already obtained;
 - b. past history of bomb threats, criminal activity or protests;
 - c. type of premises (government building, courthouse, medical facility, church or school);
 - d. potential for injury to persons or damage to property;
 - e. surrounding businesses, residences, and population density; and potential for a catastrophic event should a detonation occur.
3. When the person in charge of the building to be searched is available, the decision to evacuate will be his.
4. If the person in charge of the building is not available and the situation requires immediate attention, the first officer at the scene will direct the evacuation.
5. When federal reservations or other government facilities are involved, federal authorities will be responsible where exclusive jurisdiction exists; in all cases, the FHPD will work in cooperation with allied stakeholders.
6. If a premise or location is to be evacuated, a safe evacuation site should be identified, checked for secondary explosive devices, and secured.
7. When searches are conducted, they will be thorough, systematic, and supervised.
8. The officer supervising the search should ask an adult who is familiar with the premises to be available during the search.
9. If no specific location for an explosive device is known, search the outside of the building first, paying special attention to garbage cans, vehicles near the building and other places where it would be easy to hide an explosive device.
10. FHPD officers and other authorized search personnel should be instructed not to move any suspicious or unidentified objects.
11. Any suspicious object that is discovered should be brought to the immediate attention of the building representative and the IC; if it cannot be identified, it should be treated as an un-detonated explosive device and not touched.
12. All members of the search team will not use radios or cellular telephones during the search.
13. A search should not begin within 30 minutes prior to or after the threatened detonation time.
14. If a search is underway prior to the threatened detonation time, personnel will exit the location 30 minutes prior to the threatened detonation time and not resume the search until 30 minutes after the threatened detonation time.

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15. If the location of a device is known, be aware of the possibility of secondary devices.
16. When searching the inside, start from the bottom and work upward, checking public areas and other places where it would be easy to hide an explosive device.
17. A suspected explosive device is located, the person discovering it will note the location and description and ensure that it is not touched.
18. If a bomb threat takes place at a school the FHPD will respond, however, the school principal is in command of what action will be taken until the first PGCoPD officer arrives on scene and the command is relinquished to the PGCoPD officer.
19. If no explosive device is found after a search is completed, the IC will notify the PGCoPD and an incident report will be completed

F. Explosions

1. In cases where an explosion has occurred, the procedures for notification, scene security, and responsibility for follow-up investigation are the same as in un-detonated explosive substances.
2. When the scene is secured, the IC will coordinate the preservation of evidence and allow no one into the danger zone except rescue personnel, investigators and bomb technicians.

G. Reports

1. The OSFM is responsible for the related investigation and written report.
2. Since it is required that a report be filed on all activities that FHPD officers handle or assist in, a FHPD officer will request that a copy of the OSFM report on the incident be sent to the FHPD Chief of Police.
3. FHPD officers who responded to and assisted at the scene will list the incident on the Officers Records Management System (RMS).